

The LINK



A publication of Disability Network Southwest Michigan

Be Counted: Census 2020

Every ten years a census is taken throughout the United States to count how many people there are and where they are living. This data is used to determine the amount of federal dollars that are allocated to each state and county for resources we all use.

Why the Census is Important

The State of Michigan will receive \$1,800 annually for each person counted who is living in Michigan. This funding is used to support important services such as:

- Medicare & Medicaid
- Health Centers
- SNAP & WIC benefits
- School Lunches
- Section 8 Housing Vouchers
- IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
- Head Start programs
- Transportation, Roads & Bridges
- And more . . .

If you want to support these programs in your community, you must be counted!

Unfortunately, it is estimated that the census will only capture 81% of the population. That means Michigan could lose out on nearly 20% of the funding for these vital services. The only way to prevent this from happening is for everyone to participate in the 2020 census and be counted!

The census is only done once every ten years; this is your one opportunity to be counted in those ten years. Once the census is completed, those numbers will determine funding for services in our communities for the next ten years.



In addition to determining the amount of funding allocated for services, census data is also used to determine representation in government at the federal and state level.

How It Works

In March, each household will be receiving a unique identification number in the mail which you will use when completing the census. You can participate online, by phone, or by mail using the ID# you received in the mail. It's that simple! Some households will receive the actual census in the mail, making it even easier to participate.

The information obtained through the census is completely confidential. Individual census information is NOT shared with the IRS, ICE, law enforcement or anyone else. The information gathered is only used to tabulate numerical data on the overall population.

Census Jobs Available

The U.S. Census Bureau is recruiting to fill hundreds of thousands of positions across the country to assist with the 2020 Census count.

See article inside for information about census hiring events in our area.

517 E. Crosstown Parkway
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
(269) 345-1516

2900 Lakeview Avenue
St. Joseph, MI 49085
(269) 985-0111

www.dnswm.org

Patient No More Exhibition at Kalamazoo Valley Museum Explores the Fight for Disability Rights

A new traveling exhibition titled *Patient No More: People with Disabilities Securing Civil Rights* will be on display at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum from February 9 through June 7, 2020.

In this exhibition, visitors will learn how the protesters built networks of support from unions to the Black Panthers, influenced the media and changed the language used to report on the protest and the controversies of 504 with regard to race and deafness. Above all, this exhibition reminds all of us that disabilities are a source of creativity and innovation, not pity or tragedy.



Special Event to Kick Off the Exhibition

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum has scheduled an educational event titled *Civil Rights for People with Disabilities* as part of their “Sunday Series” to kick off this exhibition. Disability Network Southwest Michigan will provide an insightful look at the history of activism by people with disabilities and allies to secure the civil rights guaranteed to all Americans. The event is free, but space is limited. Tickets must be obtained and presented 15 minutes prior to the event. For more information about this event and the exhibition, please visit www.kalamazoomuseum.org.



Kalamazoo: Sunday, February 9 1:30 – 2:30 PM
Kalamazoo Valley Museum | 230 N. Rose Street, Kalamazoo

Ableism 101 & 102 Workshops

In its simplest form, ableism is the belief system that tells us it is better to be non-disabled than it is to be disabled. Ableism also examines disability discrimination on a systemic level by looking at the ways our society designs physically and socially segregated systems.

We offer an introduction to the concept of ableism in Ableism 101. Ableism 102 builds on what you learned in 101 with a deeper examination of the causes and impacts of ableism and what it means to be truly inclusive. (Please note you must have attended 101 prior to attending 102.) Please pre-register online at bit.ly/March2020Ableism or contact Miranda at (269) 345-1516 x120. Let us know if you need an accommodation to participate.

Ableism 101

Battle Creek: Tuesday, March 3 9:00 – 11:30 AM
United Way of the Battle Creek & Kalamazoo Region | 34 W. Jackson St., Ste. 4B

Kalamazoo: Wednesday, March 4 9:00 – 11:30 AM
Disability Network Southwest Michigan | 517 E. Crosstown Parkway

Ableism 102

Kalamazoo: Thursday, March 5 4:30 – 8:00 PM
Disability Network Southwest Michigan | 517 E. Crosstown Parkway

Disability Network Southwest Michigan has a fragrance-free policy. For the well-being of those with scent sensitivities, please do not wear scented products when visiting our office or attending events.



Join Us for Movies & Discussion

Here's a list of the Movie & Discussion events we have lined up this winter. Use the online registration links to sign up for the events or contact Miranda at (269) 345-1516 x120. Let us know if you need an accommodation to participate. Here are the locations:

Kalamazoo: Disability Network Southwest Michigan | 517 E. Crosstown Parkway

Lawrence: Van Buren ISD Conference Center - Elberta Room | 490 S. Paw Paw Street

St. Joseph: Disability Network Southwest Michigan | 2900 Lakeview Avenue

Defiant Lives

Defiant Lives traces the origins of the world-wide disability rights movement. This film tells the stories of the individuals who bravely put their lives on the line to create a better world where everyone is valued and can participate in society. Online Registration: bit.ly/2020WinterMovies

Kalamazoo: Wednesday, January 22 2:00 - 4:00 PM

St. Joseph: Thursday, January 23 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Intelligent Lives

Intelligent Lives stars three pioneering young American adults with intellectual disabilities who challenge perceptions of intelligence as they navigate high school, college, and the workforce.

Online Registration: bit.ly/vbmovies

Lawrence Tuesday, February 4 9:30 - 11:00 AM

Far From the Tree

Far from the Tree examines the experiences of families in which parents and children are profoundly different from one another in a variety of ways. Online Registration: bit.ly/2020WinterMovies

Kalamazoo: Tuesday, February 25 2:00 - 4:00 PM

St. Joseph: Thursday, February 27 2:00 - 4:00 PM

The Peanut Butter Falcon

The Peanut Butter Falcon is the story of a man with Down syndrome who, after running away from a residential nursing home to pursue his dream of becoming a pro wrestler, befriends an outlaw who becomes his coach and ally. Online Registration: bit.ly/2020WinterMovies

Kalamazoo: Wednesday, March 18 2:00 - 4:00 PM

St. Joseph: Thursday, March 19 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Who Cares About Kelsey?

Who Cares About Kelsey? documents the lives of students with emotional/behavioral challenges and shows innovative educational approaches that help these students to succeed while improving the overall school culture and climate. Online Registration: <http://bit.ly/vbmovies>

Lawrence: Tuesday, March 24 9:30 - 11:00 AM

Removing Barriers Can Broaden Your Horizons

Kacie was first referred to Disability Network Southwest Michigan through the Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation program. Through this program, our staff works with veterans to remove barriers to employment that exist due to a disability. Kacie has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and experiences chronic pain due to neurological causes.

Our staff met with Kacie to develop an Independent Living Plan which would outline her independent living goals, identify what barriers exist, and lay out the best path for achieving those goals. Due to her PTSD, Kacie had become quite reclusive; aside from her sister and nephew who she lives with, Kacie had cut off all social contact for nearly two years.



Staff worked with Kacie to explore various programs and volunteer opportunities that would incorporate her interests while slowly integrating her into social interaction with others. We connected Kacie with the Therapeutic Equestrian Center (TEC) in Watervliet which has a “TEC with Vets” program that provides services to veterans at no cost. Kacie and her sister, who is also a veteran, began attending weekly sessions at TEC. Kacie liked the people (and the horses) so much she also signed up to be a volunteer at TEC which provides her with additional opportunities to be out of the house and interacting with people.

Staff continues to work with Kacie to engage her in social activities, such as veterans peer support events, and provide her with options for other social interactions. Kacie is exploring her interests and feels more secure in leaving the house and being with other people. She said that being around the horses at TEC helps her in socializing with people because, “The horses all have different personalities, just like people do, and I realize that sometimes you just need to get to know them a little bit to be comfortable with them.”

WORKSHOP

DO'S & DON'TS: Assistance Animals

There is a lot of confusion about what qualifies as a service animal and how they differ from emotional support animals. There are specific laws regarding what type of assistance animals are allowed in different places and whether an establishment can deny access to an assistance animal. Join us to learn more!

This event is free and open to the public. Please register online at bit.ly/AssistAnimals2020 or contact Miranda at (269) 345-1516 x120. Let us know if you need an accommodation to participate.

Kalamazoo: **Wednesday, January 29** **3:00 – 4:30 PM**
Disability Network Southwest Michigan | 517 E. Crosstown Parkway

St. Joseph: **Thursday, January 30** **3:00 – 4:30 PM**
Disability Network Southwest Michigan | 2900 Lakeview Avenue



2020 Census Jobs Available

The U.S. Census Bureau is recruiting to fill hundreds of thousands of positions across the country to assist with the 2020 Census count.

2020 Census jobs provide:

- ✓ Great pay
- ✓ Flexible hours
- ✓ Weekly pay
- ✓ Paid training



The U.S. Census Bureau is hiring for a variety of temporary jobs, including census takers, recruiting assistants, office staff, and supervisory staff throughout the United States. Temporary census positions offer the perfect opportunity to earn extra income, while at the same time, helping your community.

Upcoming Census Hiring Events

Disability Network Southwest Michigan has organized two census hiring events in our area. This is an opportunity to learn more about census jobs, ask questions, and apply right on the spot! At each of these events you will have access to:

- A recruiter from the Census Bureau who can answer any questions you have about the census jobs available in your area.
- A Social Security Benefits Counselor from Disability Network who will talk about how these jobs could impact your current benefits.
- Laptops on site to apply online for a 2020 Census job.

Space is limited! Please register online in advance at bit.ly/CensusJobsEvent or contact Kristen at (269) 345-1516 x119. Let us know if you need an accommodation to participate.

Kalamazoo: **Wednesday, January 15** **1:30 – 3:00 PM**
Disability Network Southwest Michigan | 517 E. Crosstown Parkway, Kalamazoo

Benton Harbor: **Thursday, January 16** **1:30 – 3:00 PM**
Michigan Works! | 499 W. Main Street, Benton Harbor

Our Publications:

The LINK is our quarterly newsletter, available in print or emailed in electronic format and is available in alternative format upon request.

Disability Digest is a monthly e-publication focused on the Disability Rights Movement and upcoming Disability Network happenings. Available in electronic format only.

You can sign up online for our publications at www.dnswm.org; or contact Dale at abbott@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x123. Current and past issues of our publications are available on our website at www.dnswm.org.





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www.dnswm.org



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FROM OUR INFORMATION & REFERRAL DEPARTMENT

Need Help with Home Energy Costs this Winter?

Winter is here and that means we are all experiencing higher home energy bills. If your heating costs are more than you can manage, you may be eligible for assistance through the State Emergency Relief (SER). SER funds are available to provide immediate help for income qualified households experiencing a past due energy bill, shut off notice or have a need for deliverable fuel.

After receiving SER you may be eligible for an affordable payment plan through the Consumers Affordable Resource for Energy (CARE) program.

For more information, visit <https://newmibridges.michigan.gov> or contact one of our Information & Referral professionals.



Support Our Work: You can help support the work we do with a tax-deductible donation to Disability Network. Visit our website to donate [online](#) or call Kristen at (269) 345-1516 x119.